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Dartmouth Code Enforcement Investigation Update

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is conducting a code enforcement investigation as a result of the June 4, 2008 fire at Wedgewood Commons in Dartmouth which started when gasoline was illegally stored in the apartment ignited.

The occupant of the fire building indicated that he had purchased the gasoline and dispensed it into illegal containers from a local gas station. Review of the videotapes did not provide any proof that gasoline was purchased and dispensed into unapproved containers. As a result of the inspection of the service station, several non-criminal citations were issued for other fire code violations.

The Mobil station on Fonts Corner Road in North Dartmouth received a non-criminal citation for: 1) failure to maintain the suppression system and 2) failure to comply with requirements for delivery and dispensing of gasoline. The suppression system must be inspected semi-annually and this one had not been inspected since August 2007. The specific failures to comply with dispensing requirements were the inability of the console operator to observe all fueling operations through the cameras and the intercom system between the pumps and the console operator was not working properly. There is a fine of \$100 for each citation and the owner has 21 days to appeal or to pay.

In addition, an order of notice was issued to the gas station. They were ordered to allow fuel to be dispensed only into approved containers (even though there was no evidence they had not), to upgrade the camera system and to correct the diesel hose on pump #16 so that it does not extend beyond the positive limiting barrier. The code enforcement investigation is continuing.

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "All of us have felt pinch of skyrocketing gasoline prices but hoarding gasoline and storing it in the home is not an acceptable solution to high energy prices."

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